

**National Landscape Conservation System Summit**  
November 16, 2010 Focus Group Sessions

**Focus Group 7: Engaging Youth**

Note: This document summarizes comments from both BLM employees and non-BLM stakeholders during three focus group sessions held on November 16, 2010. These comments represent neither the consensus opinions of the group attending the session nor the official positions of the BLM.

Hiring/Career Pathways

- Staff should consider a wide variety of ways in which youth could be employed in the work NLCS/BLM does—e.g., NEPA work, monitoring, data collection, IT, HR.
- Paying youth for work is especially important in economically disadvantaged communities, but some will work for school credit.
- Recruit locally—establish connections with local high schools, colleges, and youth-serving organizations. Consider partnering with Job Corps.
- Need to make sure that youth are aware of how to pursue careers if they're interested. Focus on retention too. Personal interaction between staff and youth crews and between mentor and new youth employee can help to ensure success in recruitment and retention.

Incorporating Environmental Education into Youth Programs

- Environmental education is critical to youth program. You can't expect youth to be interested in employment without capturing their interest at a young age and nurturing it over time.
- Recurring, place-based education programs and fun experiences help youth establish connections to the land and develop stewardship ethics even if they don't pursue careers.
- It's sometimes challenging to incorporate outdoor education programs into the curriculum, but there is often a great need for after-school programs. Funds for transportation to BLM sites may be needed for programs to work.
- Work with partners to reach underserved youth. Engage families as well, and don't forget unstructured programs.

Internal and External Communication

- Use a wide range of media and collaborate with partners to share information about youth education, engagement, and employment programs.
- Partners may be able to assist where the BLM faces technological/security challenges—e.g., social media, more interactive and fun pages for youth.
- Provide information about the BLM's multiple use mission and ways in which youth can be involved. A "one-stop shop" or youth portal could provide information to a broad audience of both youth and partners.
- Engage young people in developing outreach materials (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) that will most effectively reach their peers.
- Sharing successes internally is important too, so good programs can be replicated.

### Streamlining Administrative Processes

- Partnerships are critical to the success of youth programs, so there is urgent need to streamline grants and agreements processes.
- A “go-to” person for youth education and volunteer programs should be designated in each state. This person would be the point of contact for youth, partners, and BLM staff and would be responsible for coordinating and facilitating youth programs. Ideally, this would not be a collateral duty position.